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Sports participation and women

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Abstract

The participation of women in sports is limited across the world. The main reason of their less participation is changing over the period of time. Sometimes it is because of supremacy of males because of their muscular strength and anthropometrical components or social segregation of work, inside and outside the home. But the chief concerns are parental pressure, inequality by society and family, religious boundations, responsibilities on women, less awards and prize money etc.

Keywords: Women, award, participation, hurdles

Introduction

In ancient time women were the power center of the society. They were acknowledged and praised thoroughly and equally to their counterpart. It was believed that the women entrusted the responsibilities of sharing the load equally on different aspects for living and sustainability. In the field of sports they were shifted to fitness related to fitness and minor sporting activities. It was believed that the strong child can be born if the mother was strong. Also in the absence of their husband or guardian, they were entrusted with the task to take care of their family. This was of tenly happened because the adult males were indulged in war most of the time. The sports were meant for hard training. Extraordinary fitness was required to train the individual to become soldier or warrior.

With the initiation of Modern Olympics in 1896 there was no sports event dedicated to women, however, they were allowed to watch the sports activities/ competitions that too limited for the women of high class.

The first participation of women in sports was Modern Olympic Games held in 1900 in Paris. Women had participated in very few games such as Shooting, Croquet, sailing etc. However, the Olympic events were opened to women in very late years. In ancient time, they were permitted to participate in sports only up to the age of 18 years and then they had to marry and take up the responsibilities of home. From the beginning only it is found that the society is completely influenced by the males (man dominating society). Throughout the world we can have several examples. Even in the Vedas and Epics, we can see the example of dominance of male fraternity. For e.g. in Ramayana (the great Epic) lord Rama left his wife Devi Sita even though she had justified her purity by walking over burning fire, but could not challenged lord Rama for his decision.

Now in this present era, the women have many hurdles and challenges to prove her presence in any of the field whether it is sports, science and corporate etc.etc. Women were always considered as delicate, physically and emotionally weak, on the other side the men folk are considered or depicted as muscular, strong, fit and healthy. That's why the number of women participants are less than the men participants, even though women are performing better and cracking medals and awards for e.g. in Olympics P.V. Sindhu (Badminton), Sakshi Malik (wrestling), Saina Nehwal (Badminton), Mary Com (Boxing).

There are many reasons or hurdles which discourage the women athletes to participate or indulge them in sports. The reason may vary with individual women sports person. It has seen that the discouragement by parents or the members of the family also influenced the women participation as they are always considered as emotional, weak, delicate, less confident etc. And according to them the sports are meant for the male people as sports is for masculine and elitist.

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The role of the government is also unsatisfactory in connection with the promotion of Women sports participation. Government did not provide the separate sports infrastructure for women to get training and mentoring to the women sports aspirants. It is also very surprising that most of the sports awards are named on male athletes or sports stars. Government failed to give the due recognition to the women in spite of the maximum medals at the Olympic level were grabbed by the women athletes. Media is also biased in providing the sufficient recognition to female athletes. This can easily be observed by the newspaper where maximum space is occupied by the reports of male team's achievements or their comments in connection with the performance. Even the advertisements are filled with male sports stars. Even though the female sports stars have wider achievement in their sports career.

More responsibilities on the shoulders of women are assumed to run the family. The maximum responsibility is assigned to the women such as cleaning the house, cooking, washing the clothes, managing home, taking care of young brothers and sisters, teaching and feeding them. In case of married, taking the care of children and in laws etc. and other house hold activities due to which they cannot focus on their training properly and do not get sufficient time to complete the proper schedule of training. Further the gender inequality also affects the participation of women in the sports. Even in the present era, due importance is given to the son in comparison to the daughter. The boys are given preference for their career, hobbies, specialization, than the girls and also more facilities and liberty is provided to them. According to them, the boy only can run their family and dynasty if he is well settled. They believed that the girls will leave the house once she got married.

Conclusion

Though the reason for participation of women in sports may differ from urban to rural, state to state of the country and nation to nation, but the key hurdles for their less participation is more or less common across the boundary. The hurdles may vary from early marriage, safety, sexual harassment, bullying, limited excess, infrastructural issues, dependency, peer pressure, body image etc. however, the elite athletes may not be deviated from these issues but are chiefly concerned with the beginner or aspirants women who wish to build their career in sports. The inequality even at the elite level like less award and prize money, dress code, harassment by coaches and team officials are more challenging than the competition in concerned sports. Certain myths like sexual competency, sustainability of performance after marriage, de-moralization by the counterpart or the team mates of the opposite gender in training camp, job security, parental deterrent and religious or cultural orthodox foundation are some other factors responsible to push back the women to enter the sports field.

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